

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE E-13

WASHINGTON POST
2 December 1983

House Committee Criticizes Reagan on Polygraph Plans

United Press International

The House Government Operations Committee issued a critical report this week calling on President Reagan to drop plans for more polygraph tests and censorship to stop leaks of classified information.

On a divided vote, the Democratic-dominated panel said that if Reagan does not rescind the policies, Congress should enact legislation against them.

The report condemned Reagan's plan to expand the use of lie detectors to investigate government leaks, saying the tests may brand many innocent workers as liars.

In addition, Reagan's plan would subject an extra 128,000 federal workers who handle sensitive information to lifetime censorship. Requiring clearance for writings and speeches of workers even after they leave the government "poses a serious threat to freedom of speech and debate cherished in our nation," the report said.

Five Republican committee members dissented from the report and

applauded Reagan "for his effort to tighten security."

The report found "no scientific evidence" that polygraph tests are valid when used, as Reagan proposes, to test federal employees to track down leaks of information to the media and others.

"The polygraph cannot distinguish between people who are lying and those who are merely afraid or nervous," especially when employees are forced to take the tests, the report said.

It criticized Reagan's plan to require government workers with access to classified information to have all writings, including fiction and speeches, that touch on intelligence matters, screened by government censors.

Not only does such censorship infringe "on the free flow of information and debate that is necessary for an informed public," the report said, it also opens the door for great "political abuse" of censorship powers.

In addition, the committee questioned whether it is necessary.